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ABSTRACT

This brief informational flyer presents practical information on the transition from school to work for students who are deaf-blind or have other severe disabilities. After defining transition, the flyer offers guidelines on: the age at which transition services should be started, areas that should be considered in a coordinated transition plan, identification of target activities, responsible personnel for transition planning, the Individualized Transition Plan (ITP) and the Individualized Education Program meeting, and participants in the ITP meeting. Transition procedures are discussed in terms of six steps: (1) develop a plan; (2) schedule a meeting and contact participants; (3) identify the needs, preferences, and interests of the student; (4) conduct the transition meeting (specific suggestions for conducting the meeting are offered); (5) implement the ITP; and (6) develop an employment resume. The flyer closes with a list of 10 steps for successful transition. (DB)

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# Transition from School to Work.

## Focus Flyer; n7 Jan 1995

**Part of Appendix A to "Services for Children with Deaf-Blindness. Final Report," see EC 304 478.**

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EC 304 481

Number 7 January 1995

# *Mississippi Services for Individuals Who Are Deaf-Blind*

## (((((((((((( FOCUS FLYER )))))))))))

*"Focusing on Quality Services to Infants, Children, and Young Adults Who Are Deaf-Blind"*

## TOPIC: TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

- Eileen R. Milner -

**This flyer will provide information about the transition of youth who are deaf-blind from the school environment to adulthood.**

**TRANSITION means "a passage or movement from one program or place to another." The goal of transition is to make sure that the services that a young adult needs will be individualized and will provide the person with an opportunity to work and be a part of his/her community.**

### AT WHAT AGE SHOULD TRANSITION BEGIN?

Transition planning should begin at age sixteen (16). For students who are deaf-blind and have severe disabilities, it is recommended that transition planning be started at age fourteen (14) or younger due to the fact that more service coordination will be needed. It is clear that all students with severe disabilities, including those who are deaf-blind, will need specific training in career education and basic skills (career options, communication, orientation/mobility, and daily living) so that the student can participate in activities in his/her community. Services must start early and continue throughout the duration of the educational program.

### WHAT AREAS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED?

Transition should be a coordinated set of activities, goals, and objectives that lead to (a) post secondary education (college or a vocational school), (b) job training, (c) employment (including supported employment), (d) adult education, (e) independent living, and (f) community participation.

### HOW DOES THE TEACHER DETERMINE WHAT ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT?

The activities shall be based on the student's preferences and interests. The student, during the Individualized Transition Plan (ITP) meeting will need to express his/her desires for life after school. The task will become more complicated if the student does not use language. If the student does not use a language system to communicate, other sources will need to be utilized. Sources can be the parents, an advocate/friend, or the use of career exploration. Questions that teachers can ask parents include:

- How can we work together so that the student is actively involved in planned activities, choice-making, and participation?
- Where do you feel the student's abilities and strengths lie?
- Where do you feel the student has weak points that could be worked on?
- What type of job do you think your child would like in future years?
- Where do you think your child would like to live in the future?

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## WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR TRANSITION PLANNING?

According to the Law, IDEA (P.L. 101-476), the school district is responsible for initiating and coordinating transition services. The school will appoint someone to be the coordinator. The coordinator is generally the teacher, but the school can designate another individual. It does not matter exactly who is responsible as long as the coordinator is clearly established and the plan is implemented.

## WHAT IF THE ITP IS NOT COMPLETED DURING THE IEP MEETING?

The parents need to ask the teacher when transition planning will begin, how it will be implemented, and what services will be available. If the teacher is not able to answer questions regarding transition planning, then the parent should speak with the principal and special education coordinator. Questions parents should ask may include, but not be limited to, the following...

- When will the ITP meeting take place?
- Who will be involved in the meeting?
- How will the student be involved?
- What areas will be discussed during the meeting?
- What activities will take place now to prepare for adulthood?
- Who will monitor and evaluate progress?

## WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE ITP MEETING?

The regulations listed in the law, IDEA (P.L. 101-476), are very clear as to who should participate in the meeting. The meeting should include the usual IEP participants (teacher, school agency representative, parents, etc.). The STUDENT and any representative of community agencies likely to be responsible for providing transition services will need to be invited to the meeting. For example, the law states that the student MUST be present for the planning process. The "team of professionals" should include the parents and the student to assure the appropriate outcomes.

*Note: Additional information can be found in Public Law 101-476, known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, State Department of Education Part B Handbook, and the State Plan.*

## WHAT ARE THE TRANSITION PROCEDURES?

It is of the utmost importance to know (a) what the family desires, (b) what activities are part of the family's daily lives, and (c) what information the family may need to access so that they can plan for a productive future for their child. This may be accomplished by conducting a family inventory, parent meetings, parent training, etc. Remember that the family may not be aware of what options are available, how to access those options, and what requirements are necessary in order to receive services.

### STEP I. DEVELOP A PLAN

Without a plan, transition may be mass confusion for all of the participants. A good, easy-to-use plan will guide the transition process and keep the meeting moving in the right direction. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) does not require a separate form/format from the IEP. Some school districts have chosen to add an addendum to the IEP or to use a separate form. It does not matter what the district chooses as long as it does not become burdensome, time-consuming and an unwelcomed task for the participants. The form should allow the team to:

- ✓ indentify outcomes in the targeted areas,
- ✓ indentify tasks and responsibilities for students, parents, family members, schools, advocates, and adult service agencies that will meet the targeted goals, and
- ✓ establish timelines for the completion of each goal. This is the most important one!

**What are the targeted areas?**

A good ITP should include all of the following areas in the planning process. Some areas will be more important for students at different times throughout the duration of school.

(1) Employment/Supported Employment
(2) Residential
(3) Orientation/Mobility
(4) Advocacy
(5) Income Support (SSI)
(6) Social Relationships
(7) Post Secondary Education
(8) Communication
(9) Recreation/Leisure
(10) Transportation
(11) Guardianship Issues
(12) Medical/Health Issues

## STEP II: SCHEDULE A MEETING AND CONTACT PARTICIPANTS

The teacher/coordinator will need to send home a "written prior notice" informing the parent(s), student, and support personnel of the meeting. The notice needs to state that transition planning WILL BE part of the meeting. The specific participants attending the meeting will vary depending upon the age of the student. The closer to graduation the student is, the more adult services should be involved. Some of the people may include:

(1) family members
(2) advocates
(3) teachers' aides
(4) occupational/physical therapist
(5) vocational rehabilitation counselors
(6) school counselors
(7) case managers
(8) speech/language pathologist
(9) friends
(10) teachers
(11) regular education teachers
(12) orientation/mobility specialist
(13) principal
(14) supported employment staff
(15) residential living staff

## STEP III: IDENTIFY THE NEEDS, PREFERENCES, AND INTERESTS OF THE STUDENT

It is stated in IDEA that transition is to be based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests. Students who are deaf-blind and do not use speech, signs, or high level augmentative communication devices may have great difficulty expressing their preferences and interests, either because of their limited communication skills or limited life experiences. Teachers and transition coordinators may need to look at the desires of the family, look at past data collection, ask a friend or advocate to be present or use the process of Personal Future's Planning (Mount 1988) to determine the student's interests.

## STEP IV: CONDUCT THE TRANSITION MEETING

The following suggestions might be helpful to conduct the meeting:

A. **Introductions** Be sure that everyone introduces themselves. Remember that adult service providers may be new members of this team. Ask them to tell what agencies they represent, so that everyone will know to whom to direct their questions.

B. **Purpose of the meeting** Describe the purpose of the meeting and why the "team" has gathered. For example, *"We are here today to discuss Johnnie's transition from the school system to the adult world. We hope to make Johnnie's transition as smooth as possible; therefore, we need to define goals and objectives. Setting the goals will assist us to plan for Johnnie's transition. We would like everyone to work together to assist Johnnie in meeting the goal of becoming a participating citizen in his community."*

An outline of the specific area to be discussed should be visible to all members. This can be accomplished through a written agenda, an agenda on the blackboard, a flipchart, or a copy of the form that will be used. This will assist in keeping the process moving.

C. **Discussion** The coordinator should encourage discussion following each question. "Where would Johnnie like to live after graduation? Would he like a group home or an apartment? Is there someone special he would like to room with?" The facilitator or coordinator will need to record the goals and outcomes that have been discussed and decided. The goals, tasks, responsibilities, and TIMELINES should be listed!! Areas that need to be included will be future living arrangements, employment options, income support, recreation and leisure activities, guardianship issues, health and medical issues, communication needs in a variety of settings, and daily living needs. For example, the desired outcome for Johnnie may be to work in a supported employment job setting. He has expressed an interest in either office work, food service, or mechanics. The goal that will be written into his IEP/ITP for his junior year may be:

**Johnnie will be provided with two work experience sites during the 1994-95 school year. One site will be at Denny's Restaurant assisting in food preparation. The second site will be working at the local insurance office in the claims department. The coordinator will focus on which job site most interests Johnnie and which site seems to suit his abilities. The teacher will develop the job site by September 15, 1994 for work to start by September 20, 1994. The second job site will be developed by January 15, 1995 for work to start by January 20, 1995.**

**Some questions to ask to determine if the ITP meeting went well are:**

- ✔ Were all of the people included in the meeting?
- ✔ Were the student's interests and preferences discussed, considered, and included?
- ✔ Did everyone work together to set the goals?
- ✔ Did the family receive information about the type of services available and how to access those services?
- ✔ Are there dates for completion of the goals?

D. **Follow-Up** After the meeting has been completed, the coordinator will need to send a copy of the minutes to all of the team members. To assist in the process, the coordinator may want to highlight the members' responsibilities and the dates by which they will need to be completed. Also, the coordinator needs to make sure everyone knows how to reach the various team members so coordination can continue. Transition should be started as soon as possible. Listed below are ways that the team can work together.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Teacher** | Identify and assign simple chores for the student<br>Identify projects that will provide work experiences<br>Visit several work sites |
| **Vocational** | Arrange times for both students with and without disabilities to interact with an adult who has disabilities so that they can ask questions about life as an adult |
| **Occupational Therapist** | Assist teachers to identify adaptation strategies<br>Plan and implement eating, drinking, bathroom use programs |
| **Physical Therapist** | Plan and implement mobility programs, or<br>Provide input on positioning |
| **Speech/Language Pathologist** | Plan and implement communication program |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Teacher** | Locate in-school work experiences<br>Visit community work experience sites<br>Visit community sites where high school students are working |
| **Vocational** | Communicate to teachers about the local job market |
| **Occupational Therapist** | Determine if adaptations or accommodations are needed |
| **Physical Therapist** | Determine if student can use a motorized wheelchair |
| **Speech/Language Pathologist** | Expand communication system to include work tasks |
| **Teacher** | Provide community work experience sites for the student<br>Provide input to vocational staff about the types of tasks and sites that would be best for the student<br>Meet with the parents to discuss current work experiences and performances<br>Introduce parents to adult service providers; assist them in the application and referral process |
| **Vocational** | Gain input from the student, family, and friends<br>Look at past data collection from the various work sites<br>Assist student in putting together a resume<br>Search for and locate employment site<br>Introduce employer and co-workers to parents and student<br>Arrange for transportation |
| **Occupational Therapist** | Indentify and implement job design strategies<br>Implement eating, drinking, and bathroom use programs at the work sites |
| **Physical Therapist** | Provide input on positioning for best motor functioning at the work site<br>Identify mode of mobility the student will use<br>Provide mobility training, if needed |
| **Speech/Language Pathologist** | Identify best mode of communication<br>Determine if an alternate communication system is needed in the community; if an augmentative communication device is needed, assist parents with this process (Sowers & Powers, 1991) |

## STEP V: IMPLEMENT THE ITP

Finding and setting up sites requires a significant amount of time. It is beneficial to establish a "pool" of sites so that students can rotate through their location/business. The following are examples:

| IN-SCHOOL | | COMMUNITY SITES/TASKS | |
|---|---|---|---|
| - main office | - attendance office | - typing | - computer data entry |
| - yearbook | - student newspaper | - word processing | - filing |
| - nurse's office | - teacher's work room | - collating | - answering phone |

*continued on next page*

| IN-SCHOOL | | COMMUNITY SITES/TASKS | |
|---|---|---|---|
| - library | - audio visual room | - stapling | - photocopying |
| - cafeteria | - counselor's office | - packaging | - mail preparation |
| - teacher's lounge | - janitorial duties | - unpacking | - light assembly |
| - testing center | - recycling project (cans) | - delivery | - light cleaning |
| | | - pricing | - child care assistance |
| | | - microfilming | - medical location |
| | | - food preparation | - dishwasher |

## STEP VI: DEVELOP A RESUME

There are two types of resumes and both are important to use. The first is a video resume. At each job site, it will be important to videotape the student working. Videos of the work site can be made before and after modifications have been made. This is a good form of documentation to pass on to adult service providers to demonstrate how the student has progressed. The video will also assist in completing work evaluations. When putting together a video resume, all parties should be aware of the taping and how the tape will be used. A consent form should be signed by the employer (for use of their location), the student, the parents, the aide/trainer, and any co-workers who would be involved in the taping. The second type of resume is a written one commonly used when applying for a job. This will also assist the adult service providers when searching for job opportunities. It will list all of the sites, dates of employment or work experience, and a contact person. Contact people are excellent sources for letters of recommendation. A teacher will need a form to track all of the job experience sites, with the dates, types of setting, duties, level of supervision and adaptations that were needed.

### Department Of Labor Regulations

When starting on a job site, remember that there are Department of Labor regulations to be followed. The Departments of Education and Labor have collaborated to promote opportunities for educational placements in the community for students with disabilities. This collaboration assures that applicable labor standards are strictly observed. One needs to remember that work experience sites need to be written into the IEP/ITP and the main goal is for training purposes. For additional information, call your local Department of Labor office (listed in the phone book in the government section under U. S. Government Department of Labor).

## WHAT ARE THE TEN STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION?

(1) Start the transition process early.
(2) Include ALL individuals and agencies.
(3) Set both short and long term goals.
(4) Include the student's desires, needs, interests, strengths, and abilities.
(5) Connect the family to the services that are available before and after graduation (get the referral process going).
(6) Make sure everyone is aware of their duties and responsibilities with dates of completion attached to the goals.
(7) Give the students as many different experiences, especially work, during the initial years to assist in locating the best choices.
(8) Discuss all areas of transition.
(9) Identify alternative strategies to be implemented to meet the objectives.
(10) Cooperate, coordinate, communicate, and collaborate; it takes all team members to pull off a successful transition!!

**References:**

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Public Law 101-476, 20 U. S. C. Chapter 33. (1990).

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